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Education of the spirit : the dynamics underlying personal and spiritual growth into spiritual commune.

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EDUCATION OF THE SPIRIT
The Dynamics Underlying Personal and
Spiritual Growth in a Spiritual Commune

A Dissertation Presented

By

Gurushabd Singh Josephs

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

April 1974

Education

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EDUCATION OF THE SPIRIT
The Dynamics Underlying Personal & Spiritual
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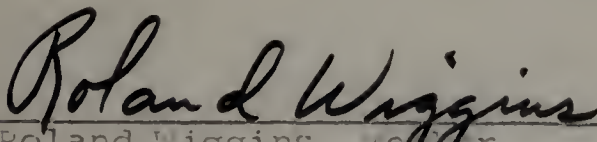
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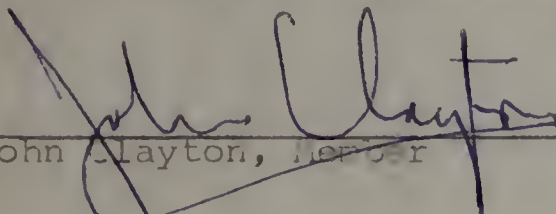
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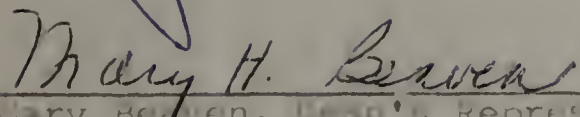
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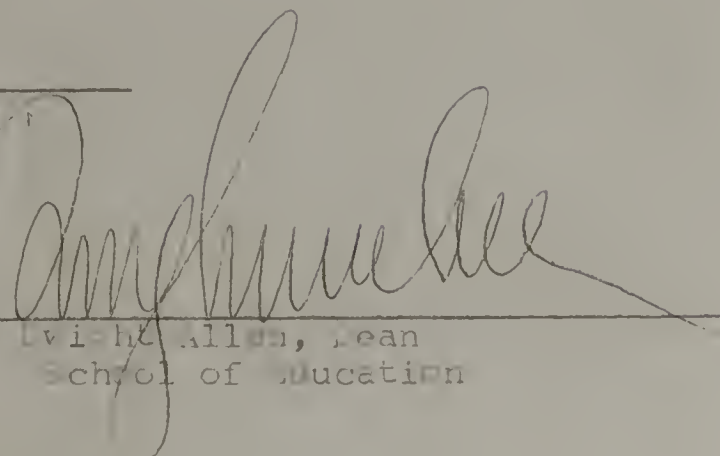
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April 1974

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project, like all projects, is dedicated to God, with most profound thanks to Siri Singh Sahib Yogi Harbhajan Singh Puri and to Shakti Parwha Kaur.

I would also like to thank my wife and my brothers and sisters in 3H0 who keep up.

EDUCATION OF THE SPIRIT

The Dynamics Underlying Personal and Spiritual Growth in a Spiritual Commune

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The daily life of an ashram (Spiritual Commune) was documented by the head teacher of that ashram. The ashram, Guru Ram Das Ashram, was located in Montague, Massachusetts, and was part of the 3HO Family, an international network of ashrams under the leadership of Yogi Bajan. Topics discussed included: 1. The aspects of ashram life that fostered commitment from its members. 2. How chanting a mantra in Kundalini, Tantric, Bhakti, Laya and Karma yogas brought about a change toward higher consciousness. 3. How the household environment contributes to a change in consciousness. 4. Relationships of ashram members with their parents. 5. Marital relationships in 3HO. 6. The contribution of Yogi Bajan to 3HO. 7. The results of a questionnaire administered to physical education classes at Smith College and the University of Massachusetts. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain the results of Kundalini Yoga on the emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing of the students.

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INTRODUCTION

EK ONG KAR SAT NAM SIRI WHA GURU!
There is one Creator who created
this creation; Truth is His name,
and great beyond all words is His
wisdom!

The following is a documentation of a lifestyle and not an attempt to proselytize. Implicit in this documentation are assumptions that may or may not be held by the reader. For instance, I feel that God exists where the reader may feel He does not. I feel that there are truths that are circumstantial in natures and therefore relative, but also that there is Truth beyond the relative level, and to experience Truth at that level is to experience God. I believe man's only purpose is to realize that infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent energy, which we call God, and live within its natural laws. If life is a riddle and the answer is God, to experience the answer while living in what was formerly the riddle is to achieve liberation while yet alive. A teacher can help. He can show one to a path that can change his destiny, but the privilege of walking the path can only be given through God's Grace. What about free will? If God is the only doer, then one does not have free will. But we are God. When we realize our own infinite identity, then our will becomes identical with His and the question of "free will" disappears. There is only one will and that is the Will of the One.

For me causal explanations are always descriptions. If one accepts a description of an explanation, it is usually because the language of the description fits somehow (aesthetically, psychologically, etc.) the conceptual constructs he uses to view and understand the world. If I throw a billiard ball through a window and the window breaks and ask the question, "Why did the window break?", I might get many different answers. An average person might say, "Because you threw the ball through it." A physicist might talk of the force, momentum, trajectory of the ball and the tensile strength of the window pane. A Freudian psychologist might inquire into particular circumstances of my infancy (breast feeding and toilet training, etc.) Still a devoutly religious person might offer that it was the will of God, which is the most parsimonious answer of all, but a scientifically valueless answer for the power of science lies in its ability to predict. If through God's will everything is possible, then we can predict that everything can happen and our power of prediction is dispersed.

Now it is true that the most fundamental believers have an operational level of etiological thought which is more practical for understanding daily events than using God's omnipotence as the only causal framework. For instance, if my car has a flat tire on the highway, I will change the tire and try to repair the flat one. To repair the flat one I'll look for a puncture and if the puncture is reparable, I'll get it plugged. Now, God is still there. It is His will

that the tire went flat; it is His will that I could change the tire. It is His will that I breathe. And yet, in talking to the repairman (who is also God) we talk of tire tread. We speak that language because it practically fits the situation.

If I were a different kind of yogi, I might have gotten out of the car after the flat and chanted to God to show my appreciation for being alive. I might have chanted and asked that the car might be restored to working order. I might have become intoxicated with the thought of God being the car, the tire, me, and the road, intoxicated that this automobile part of God was destined to be with the roadside part of God and I was there to witness the circumstance and worship the maker of all circumstances. -- But I see it as my karma to work in the world and still keep my mind full of God's praise. The work accomplished in the ashram is God's doing, and yet there is more to say to my psychologist and logician friends that will be of help in communicating educative and psychological principles underlying the ashram process. In the pages to follow I have undertaken to describe the processes of an ashram, or spiritual commune, in such a way that it will be of interest to educators, psychologists, yogis, and "lay people" alike.

The actual organizing and operating of the ashram was the main body of a project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctor of Education at the University of

Massachusetts. To merely initiate and participate in such a project was worthwhile educationally, but to further document the project with the goal of communicating its value served to make my experience available to others and expanded and clarified my own conception of ashram life. I am grateful for the opportunity to have performed that karma yoga, and hope others can gain from it as well.

C H A P T E R I

I laugh when I hear that the fish
in the water is thirsty,
You wander restlessly from forest
to forest while the Reality
is within your own dwelling.
The truth is here. Go where you will --
to Benares or to Mathura
until you have found God in your own soul,
the whole world will seem meaningless to you.

(Kabir) How to Know God, p. 53

The Guru Ram Das Ashram in Montague, Massachusetts, is a spiritual commune with a population that fluctuates from twelve to twenty, with the season of the year and many other more unpredictable factors. It houses both men and women usually ranging in age from twenty to thirty-one, although there are now two children there, both under one year. There is only one married couple, my wife and I, who function as the directors of the ashram.

The ashram began in June of 1971 with myself as the only member. By the next summer there were twenty-five ashram members comprising a household that exceeded by at least five what I now consider our sensible upper limit of population. At the time of my writing this project-dissertation documentation the ashram is completing a third year of existence and is from every outward and inward sign healthy and going strong. Life at the ashram is disciplined. We rise at 2:30 a.m. for morning sadhana (pronounced SAHD NAH, meaning "spiritual practice") consisting of Kundalini yoga exercises, chanting and meditation. Kundalini yoga is a system of chant-

ing, breathing, meditation and exercise designed to awaken the Kundalini, divine energy at the base of the spine, in order to raise the consciousness of the practitioner.

Sadhana ends at 7:00 a.m. followed by breakfast, after which the ashram members go to their respective jobs.

There are evening meditations before bed and somewhere in the day the members of the house perform daily household chores to insure that the household is tidy at least, cozy at best.

Members of the house wear white turbans and white clothes, except when working on jobs that demand more rugged attire. Ashram members teach classes at the ashram itself and in the surrounding colleges and communities. (See Appendix). We go to church on Sunday to worship God with our neighbors.

The house itself is a 150 year old farm house on twenty-five acres of land, most of it young forest. We are in the process of building a house, clearing land for more farming and trying to move toward self-sufficiency with respect to the food we grow and consume.

The ashram is one of similar households in an organization called 3HO, Healthy Happy Holy Organization, founded in 1969 by Yogi Bajan. Yogi Bajan, or "Yogiji," as he is referred to with respectful affection, is the spiritual director of 3HO which includes over 120 ashrams in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan. Yogiji is 44 years old.

Although he lives in Los Angeles, he is intimately involved with each ashram and every ashram director looks to him as the leader of this large 3HO family. There are regional directors whose task it is to keep closer contact than Yogiji is able to keep with individual ashrams. The Guru Ram Das Ashram in Montague sends monthly reports to Washington, D. C. and Los Angeles.

In analyzing the effects of ashram life upon individuals, it is first useful to understand the mechanisms that are at work to alter the consciousness of the individual. In any growth there are bound to be growing pains, and when growth occurs as rapidly as it does in the ashram, the pains sometimes are less than gentle. To lead such a rigorous life, to take so many initial risks in trying on a new identity, and to bear the pain of growth, there must be a strong commitment to the process and a faith that the end result is worth the effort.

Implicit in the structure of ashram life are commitment mechanisms that foster a sense of purpose and communion. The mechanisms are important to explore because they provide an institutionalized momentum for growth and cohesiveness without which the number of ashrams would sooner or later disperse.

One of the most thought provoking studies of commitment mechanisms in communes can be found in Rosabeth M. Kanter's Commitment and Community.¹ In Ms. Kanter's analysis of 19th Century utopian communes she noted that nine of the successful communities shared in common commitment mechanisms that un-

successful communes lacked. From her observations she discovered factors that contribute to the success of a community. In parts of the following discussion I have taken the most relevant of Ms. Kanter's constructs and applied them to life at the ashram.

When a student decides to become a member of the ashram, he undergoes a shift in emphasis with respect to friendships inside and outside the ashram. This shift, which Ms. Kanter places under the rubric of renunciation, is one of the mechanisms that fosters commitment.

"Renunciation is the relinquishing of relationships that are potentially disruptive to group cohesion, thereby heightening the relationships of the individual to the group."²

When the new student moves in, I consider it important for him to make a clean break with the past. It is part of my office to give permission for trips to visit friends or home. I often exercise that right or refusal to prevent the student from contacting the psychogenic milieu that will contribute in backsliding from higher consciousness. Other links with the past, such as listening to music associated with former conscious days, wearing hair down rather than in a turban, visiting old girlfriends or boyfriends, or simply escaping into a reclusive consciousness are openly discouraged.

The outside world is not at all shunned, but new members relate to it with their new identity. They wear a turban and

white clothes in the streets of Amherst. This can cause a conflict between what one thinks is stylish and what membership in the ashram requires him to wear. Geographical boundaries are open but because of the uniform and an internalized consciousness of what behaviors are now appropriate, the psychological boundaries are clearly existent and delineated. For example, the Amherst area may have been where a student spent many years smoking marijuana. The ashram is a place where people eat very purely and never smoke marijuana. The student may cross the geographical barrier from the ashram to town, but as long as he wears a turban a psychological barrier is still present and that barrier is hard to cross from both sides. Old friends would think twice before offering him marijuana, and in a turban the student would find it difficult to accept.

Kanter points out that many of the 19th Century communities had special words for "the outside world" that tended to reify the psychic boundaries. In our ashram I find that people refer to non-ashram locations and milieu as "out there." Since many ashram members attend the University of Massachusetts, sometimes stories of students' unkind treatment of one another will be told at the dinner table. One of the students in the physical education class said that she'd like to do morning sadhana but her roommate's boyfriend usually came in late at night, shot some heroin, and in the morning lay unconscious on the floor space where our

student wanted to do her morning sadhana. Stories like this are always followed with raised eyebrows and comments like, "It's gettin' heavy out there."

In general feeling is that most students in the University are trapped in a very cruel and energy draining world. Boredom and depression are common mental states there, where in the ashram depression is rare, especially among long time members, and boredom is unheard of.

In the surrounding community the borders are also psychic. Those people whose company is most often sought are those who have in some way found happiness in their own lives and take pleasure in sharing that warmth with others. These people, even if they live far away, would tend to be invited or visited more frequently than, say, an unfriendly neighbor. There exists an extended sense of community which encompasses other individuals, communes, and religious groups with the bond of common desires for life's fulfillment.

Language too, plays a part in setting boundaries. The ashram has its own special vocabulary peculiar to yogic practice, but mere jargon does not delineate psychic boundaries as profoundly as the use of words that form the mental constructs of higher consciousness. It is not unusual to hear words and phrases like: "sacrifice, graceful, God-conscious, living up to your infinite potential, with God's blessing I'll..., righteousness, surrender your ego, etc." Mantras, like SAT NAM, and WAHE GURU also interlace everyday

speech.

There is an avoidance of crude language, language that degrades and humor that is cruel. You are what you mentally project. If implicit in everyday language is a reflection of God-conscious thought, then using that language to the exclusion of other forms can be a technique to raise one's consciousness.

Ms. Kanter discusses the notion of sacrifice as an agent for commitment. According to theories such as Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory, the more one gives his energies for no reward, the more that person will say he enjoyed the task or the more easily he can see the task as consonant with his own aims. The "dissonance" that must be resolved is "I am not a person who works hard for nothing and I just worked hard for nothing. Therefore, I must have gotten something from it." In ashram life people continually work hard for no pay. According to Ms. Kanter this "sacrifice" encourages loyalty. This is an oversimplification of the concept of sacrifice and such a common one that I feel I must discuss it here.

In Ms. Kanter's words, "Sacrifice operates on the basis of a simple principle of cognitive consistency theories: The more it 'costs' a person to do something, the more valuable he will consider it, in order to justify the psychic 'expense' and remain internally consistent."³ Moving into ashrams and monasteries where there are "abstinences" and "austerities"

is often seen as a sacrifice. If, as Ms. Kanter states, "the process of sacrifice asks members to give up something as a price of membership,"⁴ then many ashram members will be seen by outsiders as having sacrificed heavily for community membership. But whether "abstinences" and "austerities" are sacrifices or simply natural steps in a growth process, depend on the consciousness of the one who abstains.

It may be hard for a person to stop smoking, but if he succeeds shall we call it a sacrifice? If he loves cigarettes more than life but gives them up to make someone else happy, then it is a sacrifice. If he is bored and trapped by his habit and he sees stopping that habit as the only possible sane path, then to continue smoking for altruistic reasons would be more of a sacrifice than to stop.

When most people move into the ashram they are more than ready for the "austerities" and "abstinences." They have found unspiritual male-female relationships unfulfilling. They have found cigarettes, liquor, drugs and meat unhealthful and usually unjustifiable indulgences. They have been told that they will work hard, have little time to themselves, be expected to put the needs of the group ahead of their own, and be expected to keep their mental and physical energies high and devoted to service. If the person naturally tended toward these "austerities" then the factor of sacrifice and the correlative bond of commitment

would be minimal.

Another factor which leads me to place less emphasis in the relevance of sacrifice as an agent of commitment is the lesson that sacrifice teaches. To sacrifice literally means "to make sacred." To be able to sacrifice gives one confidence in his own ability to be selfless. It engenders faith in one's own higher nature. This faith transcends structures and organizations rather than binds a person to them. If I learn in ashram life how to give up what is not good for me, then I can abstain from unhealthy activities anywhere. What is attractive about the ashram is that it is a pressured environment for personal growth, and growth is inherently exciting and rewarding. One "sacrifices" to a process of growth, and that process takes place in the ashram alongside of peers going through the same process. Because that process has such momentum and power in the ashram, people often choose to stay and make the ashram the site of their growth. Many people enjoy a life devoted to the service of others, and through the ashram, they can be of service to the surrounding community.

"Two-person intimacy poses a potential threat to group cohesiveness unless it is somehow controlled or regulated by the group. Groups with any degree of identity or stability face the issue of intimacy and exclusive attachments and set limits on how much and what kinds are permissible or desirable. Exclusive two-person bonds within a larger group,

particularly sexual attachments, represent competition for members' emotional energy and loyalty."⁵

Ms. Kanter points out that successful 19th Century communities prevented the energy draining effect of the romantic dyad on the community by either instituting celibacy or group sex and/or marriage. In the 3HO ashrams the problem is solved through celibacy before marriage and a regulated sexual and romantic life in marriage.

There is a tendency for married couples to prefer snuggling together in their private nest to joining fully in group activities. For a couple to be an asset rather than a hindrance in a community their energy must be centrifugal rather than centripetal. Their energy must radiate expansively, touching everyone with its warmth, but if the energy is directed inward it can have invidious effects on others. Such marriages run the risk of failing through emotional inbreeding and attachment.

It is understood in 3HO that a man's first obligation is to God. He has a life of service to lead. He is expected to avoid attachments to his wife and family that lead him toward withdrawing his energy from teaching and serving. Similarly, the wife is married to God first, her husband second. If out of the craziness of his male ego he becomes a monster, then it is her duty to remain steadfast in her sadhana and pray for grace to re-enter his consciousness.

On the other hand 3HO households should be cozy, so

every marriage becomes a delicate balance of occasional courtship and tenderness without letting the duties of life slip for a moment. Sometimes there is no more important duty (for the good of everyone) than to get one's marriage vibration harmonious and sometimes there is no direction that contributes more toward a loving marriage than each partner working selflessly for others. Serving others side-by-side, knowing your partner is putting forth her most supreme effort to serve and "keep up", builds a marriage that nothing can shake. And more importantly, it builds a marriage that nurtures others.

When a child is born to a couple, the biological parents have the ultimate responsibility for his welfare. Yet in many ways the entire community shares in his upbringing both in providing food and shelter for the child and helping to educate and care for him. The child is seen as God's child, entrusted to two parents and a community for a while. As long as he's there, he's no one's property but everyone's responsibility. As part of his education, he may visit other ashrams. Or, if it is decided that he has become too attached to his mother, someone else may care for him for a while. The child's unencumbered development is the primary consideration.

While a growing family could be a potential threat to the cohesiveness of a community, in this expanded family children serve to draw everyone closer. The community shares

in the responsibility of providing a general atmosphere worthy of a little child. Children raised in ashrams are seen by members as unusually radiant and fearless. If a child grows to be healthy, happy and holy in a home it reflects a divine light in that household.

Communion is the mingling of the self with the group in a sealing of oneness. "The emphasis of communion mechanisms is on group participation, with members treated as homogeneous, equal parts of a whole rather than as differentiated individuals. Communion mechanisms develop equality, fellowship and group consciousness, which lead to the formation of a cohesive, emotionally involving, and effectively satisfying community."⁶

Kanter feels that a certain amount of homogeneity facilitates communion. "More often in successful than in unsuccessful groups the members had a common religious background, similar social or educational status, or a common national or ethnic origin."⁷ The ashram has a homogeneity that comes from educational, economic and cultural similarities. Most of the members at the Montague ashram are college age. Every member is going or at some point has gone to college. All come from middle-class families, and all felt they were to a greater or lesser extent refugees from participation in a social system that was crumbling from lack of spiritual vitality.

There would be a greater sense of communion if property

were held in common. But property of individuals is retained by individuals upon entering the ashram.⁸ Room and board is \$100 per month and it is considered each member's group responsibility to be punctual with the rent. Tantric courses in the summer and winter require additional money and these financial burdens rest on the individual.

I see the structure of this financial separateness as an impediment to growth for the community. It contributes an individualized financial survival consciousness among the members. It separates those who have money from those who do not. If one member has a talent that brings him \$15 an hour as a piano teacher and someone else only earns \$2.50 an hour as a landscaper it makes it seem one person is worth more than another, when the ashram could collect all wages and distribute them equally among its members. Ashrams usually solve this problem by starting ashram businesses where everyone works hard for the same pay and the Montague ashram will embark on such a venture after the completion of the house. It is no wonder that in eight of the nine successful communities Ms. Kanter studied, private property was required to be turned over to the community.

There are forces in the ashram that lessen the distinctions made by money. When one member is in need others will donate money. Rent is waived in cases of sickness and other individual problems. If there is a group project or expense, for instance if the farm needs a tractor, members who have

the money will contribute what is necessary.

Generally, ashram members of longer standing are first to contribute money. Their identification with the community and sense of selflessness is stronger than the neophyte's. Also, they have learned through daily life and meditations not to be attached to their possessions. They really know the greatest wealth is that of the repetition of God's Name and the consciousness to serve humanity. The newer members think they know, but then again they're not quite sure. I sometimes gauge a person's progress by how readily he will donate his energies, financial or others, to a common cause. If he gives without hesitation he has reached a state of spontaneous generosity that is the greatest possession of all, and fortunately that consciousness is contagious.

A sense of communion is fostered by communal work. Springtime planting of the garden is among the most joyous times of the year. In the spring sadhana ends at 5:30 a.m. to make way for gardening in the earliest hours of sunlight. We sing and chant as we hoe and plant. There is no other communication than praising God as a family in gratitude for another spring.

Group projects, whether drawing posters, picking tomatoes or making bags of tea to sell have the highest energy. Work is a worship and when that worship is performed in a group consciousness our sense of communion with each other and God

becomes another increment stronger.

There is a saying that the secret of a happy spiritual life is *sangat* and *pangat*. "*Sangat*" is the congregation of saints and "*pangat*" is taking meals together. Each morning from 3:00 to 7:00 A. M. the *sangat* assembles for exercises, chanting and meditation. When a group chants and meditates regularly together members become extremely sensitive to one another's existence. Morning *sadhana* brings the members of the ashram to a group consciousness that is singlemindedly praising God. *Sadhana* is all composed of practical technique for cleansing the body and elevating the spiritual self. It is not a ritual any more than planting a seed in the spring is a ritual. It happens regularly, but always with a conscious purpose.

We work together and we worship together. The scriptures from which we derive inspiration come from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred writings of the Sikhs. The Siri Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of divinely inspired prayers and poetry of the Sikh Gurus and other enlightened saints and poets of their time.

Most people in 3HO consider themselves Sikhs. That identity is naturally acquired, for the 3HO lifestyle is exactly what Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, prescribed. Guru Nanak preached that there was one God, though religions and forms of worship may be many. Our dharma, or way of life, should be to rise before dawn, and meditate to God's Name.

One should earn his living righteously and share with others. He should be graceful in his relationships with others, treating all as equals. These were Guru Nanak's fundamental principles and they form the essence of ashram life as we try to live it. If a student accepts that lifestyle, he soon discovers on reading the Sikh scriptures that he is living as a Sikh. It is a small step from that discovery for a student to actually take formal vows to live as a Sikh, upholding the tenets he has already come to practice.

Taking meals together fosters another sort of communion. The meals are unusually delicious compared to the fare in other communes. A great deal of love goes into the preparation of the food and only the most healthful ingredients are used. Eating outside the ashram is discouraged. If someone's job takes him away at mealtimes a lunch for him is always prepared for him to take. If a person is a guest or member of the ashram, he will never go hungry. Ashram members are always on the lookout for reasons to have some sort of celebration, usually taking the form of feasts. Birthdays are commonly celebrated with an unusually elaborate meal culminating in a special birthday cake and/or desserts. Birthdays are particularly joyous, not only because it has become a household ritual to celebrate them in grand style, but because they provide the celebrant with a time for reflection and measurement of his own spiritual progress. The first birthday in the ashram is usually accompanied by

thoughts like, "My God. A year ago today I was sitting on my bed in a college dormitory, smoking dope, eating Hostess cupcakes, and wondering if my life would ever have a direction. What a difference a year can bring." (See Appendix for raw data supporting growth from yoga while at college). For those who "keep up" growth in ashram life is so rapid and strong that the results are almost tangible. It seems as though a year of ashram life brings personal and spiritual growth that would take many times as long in other circumstances.

3H0 Ashrams are unusually musical places. Yogiji looks to the musicians and songwriters to inspire the family. As the I Ching says:

"...Music has the power to ease tension within the heart and to loosen the grip of obscure emotions. The enthusiasm of the heart expresses itself involuntarily in a burst of song, in dance and rhythmic movement of the body. From immemorial times the inspiring effect of the invisible sound that moves all hearts, and draws them together, has mystified mankind.

"Rulers have made use of this natural taste for music; they elevated it and regulated it. Music was looked upon as something serious and holy, designed to purify the feelings of men. It fell to music to glorify the virtues of heroes and thus to

construct a bridge to the world of the unseen.

In the temple men drew near to God with music and pantomines." (I Ching, Trans. Richard Wilhelm, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970.)⁹

A community without music is an impoverished household. Without music washing the dishes is a chore. Without music to glorify the ideals we try to live, or the love we try to give, it is too easy to let life turn grim. 3HO music includes work songs, marching songs, heroic songs, love songs, devotional songs and songs to bring laughter. Opportunity for music was God's gift to bring us closer to each other and to Him. Can you think of a more loving gift?

There are regular "house meetings" usually held on Sunday mornings after sadhana. The meetings offer a time for planning, organizing activities, mutual criticism and time when people can simply express their feelings to the rest of their family. The meetings are very open ended. They usually start with discussions of logistical problems such as how do we keep the skunks away from the trash cans and the dogs away from the skunks. Usually morning sadhana is discussed. People often express frustration in trying to stay alert in morning meditations and sometimes that leads to a discussion of yogic technique. I find that this sort of talk early in the meeting serves as a prelude to more emotionally charged topics. Sometimes there is a member of

the household whose behavior has in some way disrupted the harmony in the house and house meetings are used to publicly tell that person he ought to change. Public embarrassment is used as a form of what Ms. Kanter terms "a mortification processes",¹⁰ or the breakdown of the individual's sense of separateness to give way to a sense of identity with the group. Often offensive behavior stems from a preoccupation with personal goals rather than goals seen in the light of group consciousness. One of the goals of ashram life is to build an emotional and spiritual climate that is graceful and nurturant. It is a delicate state that balances on everyone's awareness. Just as it takes everyone to make silence and only one to make noise, emotionally discordant vibrations from only one member can alter the feelings of the entire household. Peer group pressure is most important in elevating the consciousness of the household. As the head of the house I sometimes feel it is necessary to criticize someone publicly. I do this only when circumstances or peers have not provided the proper teachings. As head of the house I also have the right to ask a member to leave, and although I have never exercised that prerogative, it is generally known that as a last resort someone may be asked to leave. He may be sent to another 3HO ashram where conditions might be more conducive to his growth or simply, but rarely, expelled from the community until he has the consciousness to return in the kind of humility that allows growth. 3HO ashrams

are open to everyone who wants to seriously work on himself and strive for a group consciousness. Ashrams are closed to all those who prefer to live in their ego. Membership is based on actions and intention. If a person tries to keep up and is sincere in his effort, it is impossible for me to refuse him entrance to the ashram, but when the effort and spirit are replaced by an individual selfish consciousness then no one, including myself, has the right to remain. God as infinite truth will be praised regardless of ashram attrition. The spirit of Truth is not so fragile that it will disperse if some forget to live in their higher natures.

Leadership in the ashram can contribute to community solidarity, group consciousness, and in individual's personal and spiritual growth. All these effects are interconnected in such a way that when one factor improves the others are elevated as well. If an individual begins to develop as a more spiritual being he will be more giving and thoughtful in his actions. This usually provides an inspiration for others resulting in a higher group consciousness and a stronger community. When the feelings of community is strong weaker members are inspired to go beyond limits they might have set for themselves as individuals and stronger members are inspired by the courage shown by weaker ones. In that sense we are all one another's teachers.

I am in the formal sense the leader of the community. I am its formal spokesman. I talk to students when they

want to move in. I talk to parents of students. I set the direction of the physical work on the farm. I set the direction of what kinds of spiritual sadhanas will be practiced; I initiate new directions and make decisions when crises arise.

Throughout this process I try to keep my role as subtle as possible. When I first started the ashram I was concerned with being a leader. Now I am more concerned with teaching others to be leaders. I try to set up circumstances that demand growth from individuals. Toward that end I delegate much of the responsibility for running the ashram to people who are ready to grow. The management of the garden, the building of the house, care of the garden, management of financial affairs, and teaching of classes are all tasks that affect the welfare of the community. All these tasks involve quite a bit of autonomy and creativity. In all these delegated responsibilities it is understood that I have the final say, but I would rather have people learn from their own mistakes than my direction. Since ultimately the delegated responsibilities are mine, I stay enough in touch with all the activities to prevent serious mistakes.

It is also important to note that our ashram is one of many 3HO ashrams, all of which come under the direction of regional directors and ultimately Yogiji. Because the family consciousness extends past the boundaries of single ashrams, it helps prevent teachers from generating personality cults in their own ashrams. The heads of ashrams are not the

sources of the teachings we practice and all of them were students once themselves. Yogiji taught us everything we practice and will practice, but even so Yogiji had teachers and their teachers had teachers. The source of all knowledge is God and those heads of ashrams are unfortunate who view themselves as a source of inspiration rather than a humble channel for truth.

The importance of Yogiji's leadership cannot be overstated. He is the master of Kundalini and Tantric yoga. Like many of the leaders of successful organizations he is a leader by virtue of the power of his personality, the clarity and vastness of his vision, his compassion and his firm teaching. In an age when occult and psychic powers are viewed with awe and interest, Yogiji's considerable powers contribute to the respect he commands. 3HO is a family of which Yogiji is the father. In that sense every ashram head owes some of the respect he enjoys from Yogiji's endorsement.

My own spiritual leadership as an agent that fosters commitment is hard to assess. I try to be steady in my own life, marriage and sadhana. I try to interject a little humor when things are too mundane or serious, a little sobriety when things are crazy and some perspective when people are feeling weak and negative. I am very strongly committed to the growth of each person and the group consciousness of the house. I have passed the stage of questioning the process of growth that goes on in the ashram. I know from my own

experience that it "works," that the yoga "works," and the surety that experience has brought, plus God's grace, keeps me steady in my projection. To what extent these factors affect the ashram is hard to say, but I can say that the total effect of the 3HO experience brings people to a consciousness they never dreamed was possible for them to enjoy. In the following sections we can take a closer look at how a person spiritually and psychologically evolves to that consciousness.

C H A P T E R I I

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, And the Word was God."

Gospel according to St. John

"In the beginning was Brahman, with whom was the Word; and the Word was truly the supreme Brahman."

Rik Veda

"A word is just an explosive clutter of sounds made by expelling the breath over the tongue, teeth and lips..."

J. B. Watson, The Ways of Behaviorism. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1928. p. 97.

Yoga means Union and the union sought is between the small self and the Infinite Self or between individual consciousness and God consciousness. The yoga we practice comes under the heading of Shakti Yoga which includes both Kundalini yoga and Tantric yoga. Tantric yoga is the yoga of male-female relationships and is practiced only under Yogiji's direct supervision. Kundalini yoga through breathing techniques, chants, meditations, exercises and kriyas awakens the divine energy that is dormant at the base of the spine, thereby raising the consciousness of the practitioner. Kundalini yoga, as we practice it, includes hatha, karma, bhakti, raja, laya, and surat shabd yoga.

Rather than undertake technical explanations of each separate yoga, it will be more helpful if I explain the common thread running through all of the practices, and that is the chanting of God's Name to reach the state of Yoga. Throughout all the exercises, breathing techniques, chants, mental energy focussing techniques, and kriyas, the Name of God, in the form of the mantras SAT NAM or WAHE GURU, is continually chanted. This keeps the purpose of the yoga clear, to expand the small self to its infinite potential, and that infinite potential is God.

The power of words is well known. Words can make a person sad or jubilant, angry or calm, reverent or resentful. How do these "explosive clutters of sounds," as Watson called them, acquire such a power? Does a mantra,

which too is a word, have a special power, and if so, why?

Behaviorists have an answer to the question of the power of words. In Andrew Salter's explanation of hypnosis in What is Hypnosis?¹ he cites the following experiment of Ralph Menzies.²

"Subjects seated in a chair were presented with the usual stimulus of two illuminated crosses in an 'XX' pattern. They were asked to whisper upon presentation of the stimulus the word 'crosses.' Two seconds after the presentation of the stimulus the subject's right hand was immersed in ice water. Because of a bilateral reflex reaction, lowered skin temperature of one hand produces a drop in skin temperature of the other hand. Menzies recorded the fall in temperature of the dry hand during the 30 seconds the right hand was immersed in cold water. After 40 training sessions all of the five subjects could produce a drop in temperature of the left hand (the dry hand) merely by seeing the illuminated stimulus and whispering 'crosses.'"

Everyday speech has with it a history of associations that can make the words function as conditioned stimuli. For instance, merely talking about food can produce gastronomical changes and salivation. V. M. Bechterev was well aware of this aspect of words. "Every word, being a sign, is, in accordance with the association-reflex scheme, associated

as a secondary stimulus either with an external or internal stimulus, or with some state posture, or movement of the individual in question. The word consequently plays the role of an external stimulus, and becomes a substitute, according to the association established, for an external influence or a certain inner state."³ (Italics mine.)

Morning sadhana offers a situation in which mantras become associated with certain mental states.

Our "subject" is seated in a comfortable cross-legged position. As he breathes, mentally he chants "Sat" on the inhale, "Nam" on the exhale. From other experiments in meditation we suppose, if the subject's meditation is going normally, that he is producing Alpha brain waves, that his metabolism, blood pressure are reduced. Subjectively, he might report a state of well being.⁴

So we are pairing this state of well being to an internal repetition of a mantra, Sat Nam. Even if the mantra had no intrinsic relative qualities as a sound vibration, it would become a positive conditioned stimulus through its use in the meditation.

In the Siri Guru Granth Sahib it is written: "Call upon Him with every breath you draw, and the trouble of your inner mind will depart."

The breath has always been an important part of nearly every meditation and martial art. In two very sophisticated martial arts the word for breath also means spirit or power, e.g. "Ki" in Aikido and "Chi" in T'ai Chi. The breath is the

symbol of life. When the last breath leaves us then "our pranas have left us." Our life has flowed out of the body. To become aware of every breath is to be conscious of your life. To link every breath to a mantra is to be grateful to God, the giver of Breath, for this life. And this attitude of gratitude is a supremely calm state of mind.

This concept is not limited to eastern tradition. Christianity has its own meditative practices. The following is a passage from the Patriarch Callisotis and his fellow worker Ignatius of Zanthopoulos:

"You know, brother, how do we breathe: we breathe the air in and out. On this is based the life of the body, and on this depends its warmth. So sitting down in your cell, collect your mind, lead it into the path of the breath, along which the air enters in, constrain it to enter the heart together with the inhaled air, and keep it there. Keep it there, but do not leave it silent and idle; instead give it the following prayer: 'Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.' Let this be its constant occupation, never to be abandoned. For this works, by keeping the mind free from dreaming, renders it unassailable to suggestion of the enemy and leads it to Divine desire and love."⁵

Let us say our meditator has linked a positive state of physical and psychological well being and a grateful mind-state to a mantra. This meditation is repeated at

night so that his days and nights are surrounded with a calming process in which the mantra is reinforced as a positive stimulus. Usually a student then begins to use the mantra in the course of the day. For example, just walking along he could inhale "Sat" and exhale "Nam" and the walk becomes meditative. Or, if he becomes involved in an emotionally charged situation and wishes to keep a calm perspective, he can inhale "Sat," exhale "Nam" and the tranquility which he enjoys in morning meditation can come to him. Even in dreaming the mantra is useful. Reports of coming through nightmares by chanting SAT NAM are not uncommon.

Now the mantra becomes attached to everything. It is attached to the breath and breath is never gone if one is still alive. Also, in the ashram, it is used as a telephone greeting, for salutations and farewell, for calling attention and for general exclamations of all kinds.

The user of the mantra doesn't have to think of the meaning of the mantra for the positive reinforcing qualities to take place. Repeated associations with positive states have indelibly stamped the mantra with positive affect. The peace of SAT NAM starts to pervade everywhere -- on the telephone, at the table, while working the mantra is always there -- permeating more deeply every circumstance and every memory.

The mantra itself cannot be polluted by pairing it with so many mundane or "unspiritual" circumstances because each

night and each morning it is paired with the meditative states. Also, the mantra itself is treated with reverence, and there is more meaning attached to it than mere sounds linked to a positive mental and physical state.

SAT means Truth, not individual truth or truth that is true for one and not others. Neither does it refer to relative or circumstantial truth. It symbolizes an infinite Truth, the Truth that was here before mankind and will be here when we're gone. The Truth that great sages like Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tsu, Guru Nanak were able to find.

NAM means Name or the manifestation of the Truth. Everyone and everything becomes SAT NAM, as a manifestation of divine Truth. The mantra is all inclusive and a way of referring to God as infinite Truth, so all becomes God and Truth. To utter SAT NAM is to acknowledge God's omnipresence and omnipotence. It is to acknowledge that you are part of the divine energy. And SAT NAM is an expression of gratitude for the creation and your small part in it.

Now I have come to a point of departure with the behavioristic explanation. Behaviorism is useful because we do have habits, reflexes and associations and they do affect us. The power of the word as an associative reflex is important, but it leaves somethings unsaid. SAT NAM is a mantra and mantras have an intrinsic power beyond mere association.

✓ Sounds affect us emotionally and mentally. There are ragas that should be played only in the evening and some for the

morning. Some ragas, raga asa for instance, set a vibrational pattern of notes that evokes a longing for God.

When we chant a mantra, it is as though we are tuning every neuron in our body to vibrate at a certain frequency. That mantra vibration is already present in the universe and just as a properly tuned A string on a cello will vibrate sympathetically when the whole orchestra plays "A," the mantra, if properly chanted, will sympathetically vibrate the one who chants.

If one chants enough he begins to live in that vibration. Yogiji told us to chant ONG NAMO GURU DEV NAMO to tune into his vibration and once at a Summer Solstice Tantric yoga course I discovered how completely he lives in that vibration. I was in a Tantric line and suddenly became ill. I felt that I was about to faint and knowing that that would disrupt the energy flow I tried to signal Yogiji. I looked at him, tried to focus my energy in his direction and mentally called his name. That had no effect. I was one among 1,000 people and I thought there was little hope for my contacting him. Then I remembered that Yogiji lives on a vibration that is much more expansive than the vibration of his own name. Again I looked in his direction and began to chant ONG NAMO GURU DEV NAMO. Halfway through GURU Yogiji snapped his gaze in my direction and with exaggerated lip motions mouthed the words "What's the matter with you?"

The rest of the story is equally interesting but not

relevant here. The point is that after chanting for so many years Yogiji's consciousness vibrates on the level of the mantra and when we vibrate on that level we can communicate with him.

I will resist the attempt to stretch behaviorism to the point where it could explain the above story. The fact is behaviorism is useful sometimes and not useful others. Just because it is not useful sometimes we should not think its helpful explanations are erroneously conceived. A wrench is a wrench and just because it can't turn a screw there is no reason to stop using it on bolts.

Mantras connect us to the cosmos and no matter how small the task we perform, if we simply chant a mantra our work becomes a grateful meditation. It is Karma Yoga, the yoga of selfless work.

If one is given the task to clean a sidewalk with a whiskbroom and there is no other way, then the task must be accomplished with economy, total attention and positivity. The One Creator is the only doer and in performing Karma yoga the yogi is blessed with the opportunity to be a channel for God's energy. The task is never done for the self or even by the self. God is the worker, the work, and the will to work is God given.

If one is asked to write an essay for school then the essay is to be written with perfect attention and no thought of reward. Suppose a pupil receives a "C+." If he did his

task properly he cannot be insulted for he knows his attention was perfect and that he could not have done any other job but the one he had done. If he receives an "A" then if he is a good yogi he should not be swayed by flattery into thinking he had anything to do with it. No grade can add or subtract to the devotional offering of selfless work.

The mantra plays an important part in Karma yoga. To attach SAT NAM to each sweep of the broom or shovel of snow is to help center the mind and make the work process a meditation. The trick in menial tasks is to pick the right chant, the one with the proper rhythm and tempo, attach the bodily motion to the rhythm and let God do the rest. In hoeing a field never miss a beat. Not only will the meditation be fulfilling but the work tends to be completed more efficiently and perfectly.

Karma yoga is an attitude and that attitude can pervade every task, even Kundalini yoga exercises. The body is the temple you have been given to inhabit this lifetime. Why not keep clean inside and out? Each breath in an exercise cleans the body. Each repetition of the mantra cleans the mind. As thought and action unite to sweep the being free of its past karma so the being is free to unite with God. Our souls are given bodies and in these forms we are to work in perfect harmony with God's will. How do we know what is God's will? We don't; not yet, at least. We merely

perform the services that our intuitions and teachers tell us will lead us to a greater state of awareness. As we become more expanded in submission to the process, our will becomes one with God's. In this state of yoga, work can never be a chore for we are at one with the work, and the universe that encompasses it. In that state is it still necessary to work? The universe is always in motion, always in a process of integration and disintegration. If part of that process at a particular moment is to pick up a stone and place it on another to form a wall, then why not pick it up and be part of the process? There is nothing else to do.

Zen saying, "Before liberation chop wood and carry water. After liberation chop wood and carry water."

Everyone experiences sitting meditation differently to begin with. At the very start some may see colors, vivid cartoonlike visual imagery, hear sounds, flashbacks to the past, or other fanciful experiences. Soon after the beginning of practice, through techniques of linking the breath with the mantra, the mind calms down and the thoughts and images become less frequent. The practitioner finds he is able to sit motionless and his mind can enter a state of stillness that is keenly appreciative. He experiences a feeling of love without a love object, a feeling of selfless appreciation. He can feel the breath enter his body and

leave his body as though he were a hollow channel for the force of life. Each breath becomes a precious gift and one feels grateful for the energy that is formless in every form. To feel infinitely linked with the universe through the life force that rides on the breath is a very blissful state. All this positive effect is not only paired with SAT NAM, but from the cognitive perspective of the meditator it IS SAT NAM. Cognitions now become spiritual in orientation.

The cognitive leap is an important one. Now events, perceptions and memories become linked under a common perceptual and conceptual thread, SAT NAM. The subjective feeling is that all is energy. What is more, that energy is purposeful and benevolent. It has a name, SAT NAM. One only must submit to the idea that he is made of divine energy, (or God) that he is a manifestation of SAT NAM; then every perception and cognition become a Bhakti Yoga. To see a little boy eating an orange is to see God being fed by God (the orange) and the energy in the process is God. The desire to eat is God and the observer is also God. Whether something is energy or matter is irrelevant. Matter can change to energy and energy to matter. It is all one and that One is the only One.

SAT NAM has affected the perceptual and cognitive world of the meditator. Now let us explore the effects on the unconscious. Let us define the unconscious mind as the repository of effective memories, stored facts, and even

unconscious memories from past lives. This is the mental legacy left to us when we begin to meditate. For the late 20th century American, at least, it is for the most part a legacy of stored ignorance, of misapprehensions and negativity.

When we speak of the unconscious mind we are venturing into little known areas. The following experiment of Diven's,⁶ which is again cited in Salter's work, will serve to illustrate how I conceive of the unconscious mind.

"Subjects were asked to give their associations to lists of words that were read to them. For example, the word barn occurred six times on one of the lists, and was always preceded by the word red and followed by a painful electric shock. The shock caused emotional disturbances that produced fluctuations in a galvanometer attached to the subject.

"When the experimenter finished the word list, the subjects were given a five minute rest, and again connected to the galvanometer. They were asked to recall as many of the words as possible, and their emotional responses were recorded, to determine how much of the electrically built-in emotions had remained. Then the experimenter repeated the stimulus words, but without any electric shock.

"Diven found that a 'complex psychophysiological disturbance became associated' with the critical (shock) words. The conditioned disturbance to the critical word barn was transferred to all the words on the list which were rural in mean-

ing, such as hay, cow, and pasture. Significantly enough, words that were not on the original list but were also rural in meaning -- farm, for example -- also produced emotional responses. Words on the list, preceded and followed the word barn, and were once neutral, in the manner became emotionally charged."⁷

Just as the subjects related "emotionally" to the critical words and related words, our mind stores its memories in lattice works of related experiences and impressions, some of which are more positive than others and some of which are more accessible than others. This storehouse of recorded experiences seems to have a foment of its own and I cannot pretend to know its specific workings.

Let us hypothesize, however, that at least operationally the machinations of the unconscious mind are similar to the workings of the minds of our subjects in the study cited above. The unconscious records experiences, either positive or negative, and these recorded experiences probably serve to color future and stored cognitions, and perceptions. It is important to note that the emotional coloring of otherwise neutral events, objects or experiences can take place unconsciously.

If the mind is continually repeating SAT NAM with all its positive associations perceptions and cognitions begin also to acquire a positive flavor. Just as electric shock can negatively color other words, positive memories and stored affect have the power to lighten the mind. The mantra sinks

deep into the consciousness of the meditator and as the mantra brings equanimity and an expanded perceptive the wounds of the past begin to lose their sting. A mind that is confirmed in its positivity can never be shaken.

When a meditator first begins his practice he might find his mind is almost impossible to quiet. He might also find that many of his thoughts are negative. There is no way to avoid the past. If one has any fears meditation is sure to uncover them. What does one do, then, with a negative mental state?

The following situation is hypothetical but not uncommon for a beginner. He finds himself in a situation where his attitude becomes totally sour. In visiting his parents for the weekend his mother has maligned his new identity. He is finding it difficult to be positive toward her. He becomes angry and his mind is in duality.

Negative side: Her life is a mess. She's got no right to criticize anyone.

Positive side: She brought you into the world through her labor pains. She diapered and fed you. You can't say a thing against her.

Negative side: Their cabinets are full of liquor and their minds are full of T.V. soap operas.

Positive side: Yeah, your mind is full of negativity and self righteousness.

Negative side: She's rotten and complacent.

Positive side: She bore you onto this planet. To
curse her is to curse your own life.

Negative side: Just let me tell her off this once.

Positive side: Why spread the garbage? You're just
emotional. Inhale Sat exhale Nam.
It will fall into place.

Negative side: I would just once and for all like to
expose her to the shallowness of her
life.

Positive side: How shallow are you that where she has
given you the greatest gift you want to
show her the greatest pain?

Negative side: Yes, but I must tell the truth.

Positive side: You shut up. Live the Truth. Inspire
her with your grace.

Negative side: I have no grace now.

Positive side: No grace in the small ego. Let your-
self expand and become one with the
Giver of all grace.

Negative and Positive: Inhale SAT, exhale NAM.

Such a dialogue is fictitious. They are never quite
that complete, but the above illustrates that the closing is
not with positive thought. Positive and negative have ex-
hausted each other, and it ends in an expansive neutrality
that transcends the situation. When everyday actions are
performed in that expanded awareness then one meditates in

all life's situations.

When through the training of the mind the unconscious itself becomes cleared through positivity, then one's intuitions become accurate. The perceptual process becomes a higher proportion of perceptions rather than projections. For the mind has become more calm and is content to receive rather than protect itself by projecting its own constructs. A person may discover in this receptive state that he is "psychic." He has merely neutralized his thoughts to the extent that he can receive.

Through the repetition of the mantra, the mind has become clear. The body can also be manipulated to change the emotional state to positivity. The relation between mind and body is well known. The current popularity of Rolfing, Bioenergetics, psychomotor therapy, polarity therapy and even acupuncture in psychotherapy indicates that modern psychological thought is starting to encompass concepts from the east.

The philosophy from the yogic perspective is simply that the body has systems of circulation, digestion, elimination, perception, neurological, endocrinal and hormonal balance, and flows of energy. Through yogic exercises the body can be so finely tuned that all the body's systems function optimally. If, as recent experiments have shown, biochemical factors are important in altering mental states, then it would seem worthwhile to practice a discipline which keeps the

internal chemistry perfect. No matter how dark a student's mood at the start, an hour of exercises that leave his body and nervous system humming perfectly is bound to positively affect his mental state.

The psysiological effects of Kundalini yoga are easy to feel and difficult to document scientifically. Students report that after beginning the yoga they are much more energetic, it is easy for them to relax at will, their athletic ability improves and their emotional states become more stable. For thousands of years yogis have extolled the benefits of certain exercises. But it is not within the scope of this project to scientifically determine questions such as whether long deep breathing in the Maha Mudra Asana makes the pituitary gland secrete. "Does the shoulder stand stimulate the thyroid and do slow neck rolls activate the parathyroid?" My intuitive answers to all the questions would be "yes" because I know that in its own way yoga is very practical and scientific, although its language is unscientific. I have seen prescribed exercises change an impotent man to a potent one, change mental states of forgetfulness to eidetic retention and clarity and change depression to love. What physiological and psychological factors affected the change is difficult to say.

The advent of Kirlian photography has yielded startling research possibilities.⁸ The human aura is the visual manifestation of the psychoelectric magnetic field around the body. For thousands of years yogis and psychics have seen

auras, but since most scientists could not see them it took the invention of a photographic technique, which can detect the aura, to bring auras into enough repute and measurability for science to acknowledge them.

The aura around the head has three parts -- the force field close to the head, then a section radiating further from the head which may show different colors, and finally the exoskeleton called the circumvent force. The circumvent force is a magnetic field which protects the individual. When that field is weak he is susceptible to negativity from others or illness. When it is strong one can almost feel it. That person will have a presence. You may sense that he is about to arrive before he comes into the room. You might feel his presence in a room even if you weren't looking directly at him. A person with a powerful circumvent force is strong, energetic and unworried.

Kundalini yoga is said to build the circumvent force. Current researchers are comparing students of Kundalini yoga with students of other meditation techniques and a control group by measuring each subject's auro with Kirlian photography. These studies will be published by the Kundalini Research Institute in Pomona, California within a year.

Studies in neurochemistry have tried to discover the physiological correlates of emotional states with some success. As most reasonable scientists will conclude, both cognitive and physiological factors play important roles

in emotional states. Schacter and Singer⁹ in their famous experiments with adrenaline showed that while injections of adrenaline raises the excitatory level of the subject, his reaction might be elation or rage depending on the cues around him. Doctor Kety comments on Schacter and Singer's work:

"It would be a mistake to conclude that neurochemical factors were the only or even the most important factors mediating affective states... In the case of peripheral epinephrine they (Schacter & Singer (1962)) showed that changes induced in mood were to a large extent dependent upon the set of the individual and the social situation...

"It is possible to make the same inference with regard to central affective states. The biogenic amines may play the chords of the affective states, but the melody is carried to a large extent by cognitive factors. The whole performance can best be appreciated by an awareness of both the biological and the psychosocial processes."¹⁰

A perfect example of how cognitive and physiological factors combine to produce a higher state of consciousness is Laya yoga. Laya yoga utilizes sound current meditation in conjunction with physical muscle contractions to raise energy plus Raja yoga techniques of mental focus. In Sat Kriya, which is technically both Laya yoga and a Kundalini

Yoga Kriya, the energy is raised by a contraction of the muscles of the genitals, anal sphinctors and the navel point. Technically this is known as mul bhand, the root lock, or that which pressures the energy at the base of the spine to the point where it ascends the spine. At each muscular contraction one chants "SAT" and "NAM" is said upon release of the muscular lock. All this is done with the hands locked over the head and in a position sitting on the heels. The rhythmic contraction of the mul bhand creates a feeling of tremendous energy. The back of the lower spine feels as though it begins to swell with power. The face tingles and the cheeks seem to fill with energy, forcing them up so it is natural to smile. The top of the head can feel heat or pressure and the action of the kriya continues to bring energy up the spine.

In a certain sense we have a situation similar to Schacter's experiment. Schacter gave his subjects adrenaline to raise their level of excitation. The yogi uses the mul bhand.

With such energy at work it might be possible for the yogi to get emotionally either upset or ecstatic. In the case of a very troubled person, such a strong kriya is not recommended. Powering a troubled mind with intense energy is not wise. That's why these kriyas are always taught gradually and with great care. What prevents unwanted emotional reactions is the mantra. The mantra provides a

framework of positivity within which the energy can raise the consciousness of the yogi.

The yoga raises tremendous energy on the physical level and the mantra and mental focussing techniques direct the energy toward a very highly charged positive state which is at once detached and keenly grateful. Without the mantra to give the proper focus this amount of energy could be dangerous or at least spiritually pointless. Guru Nanak, in a meeting with accomplished yogis of his day, preached the state of the mind was all important. Yogic postures and displays of occult powers were rooted in Maya.

"Oh Yogis, this is the essence of the Word:

Without the Name of the Lord there is no Yoga.

He alone realizes the Bliss who ever lives in the Name."¹¹

The only true Yoga is union with God.

C H A P T E R I I I

"Wondrous are the ways of the Devotees
For they tread a difficult path,
And they shed their greed and ego and craving,
and they speak but little;
Their path is sharper than a dagger's edge,
finer than a hair's breadth
They who shed their ego, by the Guru's Grace,
are saturated with the desire for their
Lord.
Wondrous have been the ways of the Devotees,
throughout the ages."¹

Peace Lagoon

When a student wants to move into the ashram, I try to discourage him. I tell him he will have no time to himself, he will be expected to put the needs of the group ahead of his own and that he will have to work very hard. It is fruitful to do a sadhana on one's own and praise God in whatever way he enjoys. Life in a 3HO ashram is difficult, and I want to make sure the new member knows he's in for a rough time.

Most students who ask to move in are prepared. They have been to numerous yoga classes, they have stayed in the ashram for a few weekends, they have probably attended one of Yogiji's lectures and they might have even gone to a Tantric Yoga course. Usually by the time they ask they're ready to move in.

Every student is an individual and everyone grows differently. Some people are elated at first, others are depressed, unsure, afraid and tempted to leave their suitcases packed. People who are shy sometimes feel that ashrams are very holy places and they prefer to remain silent rather than risk appearing unholy. They tiptoe about and are confused by laughter. To fit in instantly is a blessing and to have to work to fit is also a blessing. Either way, time and daily sadhanas accumulate and the new member soon feels as though he has found a loving family in the ashram.

There is always a sort of honeymoon period in ashram life. Moving into the ashram, no matter how demanding ashram

life may be, is exciting. It symbolizes a desire to grow and willingness to take risks for the sake of that growth. The morning sadhana is usually much more complete than any sadhana the student has done on his own and the effects of the more powerful yoga plus the group energy show up in feelings of exhilaration. It never surprises me if new members get a bit fanatical about sadhana. They like to do the hardest exercises and the ones that produce noticeably altered states of consciousness. They may feel they have found the superior way of life and feel as though they must convince old friends or members of their family to study yoga.

As time passes they may find that the pressures and vicissitudes of ashram life bring to the surface personality problems they may have felt they were leaving behind by living a simple healthy existence. Incidents may arise that illustrate how they are still in some ways attached or angry or whatever their problem happened to be. Because their lifestyle is more saintly it may take more careful scrutiny to detect an overblown ego, but it is certain to be there and sometimes this discovery brings feelings of discouragement. In the writings of Guru Arjun he refers to the spiritual path as "the path on which the destination ever recedes." The more one knows the more he finds there is to know. It seems unbelievable at these moments that you will ever reach a state of clarity.

Eventually feelings of discouragement give way to a more realistic and less attached perspective. The path might be difficult and long but what else is there to do?

In Journey to Ixtlan Don Juan gives Carlos advice that applies to any spiritual path:

"Lowering his voice to almost a whisper he said that if I really felt my spirit was distorted, I should simply fix it -- purge it, make it perfect -- because there was no other task in our entire lives which was more worthwhile. Not to fix the spirit was to seek death, and that was the same as seeking nothing, since death was going to overtake us regardless of anything."²

Once you know that it is possible to progress, and in fact there is nothing else to do, then returning to old ways is impossible without pain. There is no way to unlearn the sense of responsibility once you have felt it. One 3HO woman describes her experience of leaving an ashram and attempting to live as she had before she had done yoga.

"I couldn't work at the Post because I was having too many affairs with all the reporters and it was driving me crazy. Newspaper life was real heavy and I couldn't hold myself together because I was living a lie. Because I had the consciousness to live as a pure woman and I wasn't doing it

and the duality that I lived in was killing me."

There is no going back, for no matter how painful it might seem to go forward, going backward is the saddest of all possible acts. Yogiji has told us the Maha Mantra of the Aquarian Age is "Keep Up!" At times when one's perspective is small, he merely has to push through it. To keep up is to realize that problems of any kind are temporary and usually fall away with steady daily effort. After a time the student gains the confidence that the eradication of his ego is in God's hands. Our only job is to do a good sadhana and "keep up." There is only so much one can do, and, realizing that, one becomes more relaxed about progress. In the Japji Guru Nanak says:

No power to speak
 Or silence to keep
 No power to beg, no power to give;
 No power to die, no power to live;
 No power to rule
 Or gather the soul
 No power to awaken my soul to Thee
 No power to find the way to be free.
 By this will alone, I cannot find the Way,
 Leave me not to rely on my will, this I pray.
 Of myself I might never know,
 Which one is high and which one is low.³

When the student finally understands that all he can do

is keep up and since his progress is not up to him, he can relax into a steady existence of praising God and working hard. Once the student surrenders to the idea that that is all there is to do, life becomes much easier. From that point the direction is set. Each day teaches one a little more about surrender and the beauty of God's universe. When one slips in his attitude, the ensuing pain of separation from God always brings him back to steadiness with a deeper perspective and humility.

Problems are not gone. It is only a transcendent perspective that renders them helpless to shake a man. A demon and a saint have the same essence. Both souls belong to God, but a demon jumps up and down while a saint remains calm. Progress on the spiritual path means teaching your demons how to meditate. When every part of you learns to praise God then the personality has become integrated in God consciousness. Until then group consciousness, faith, courage, God, Guru and teacher are the sustaining forces.

The ashram as a socializing force does much to support new members in the consciousness to which they aspire. For one thing, no matter what their personality problem they have little time to indulge in it. Being neurotic sometimes seems like a luxury of a rich nation. In India people are very poor. Their standard of living is quite low and yet, the religious people, at least, are quite happy. In India there are people who have nothing and yet they give their

energies gratefully to building temples and working in free kitchens. The Golden Temple in Amritsar serves free food for 10,000 people every day. The making and serving of the food is all done by people as a free service. One of the men who worked at the temple said to me, "There are only two things in my life 'Simeron and Seva.'" (repeating God's name and serving humanity). His life was very happy and very simple. I am not suggesting that poverty is the road to happiness. Poverty is a curse. The consciousness to serve is the blessing.

In military services all over the world there are boot camps for new recruits. These camps are designed to break down the sense of individuality and break down the ego to make a soldier who will take orders without question. Every bit of personal identity is taken from them. They are pitted against other soldiers. They are punished. They are humiliated and exhausted. They experience a complete breakdown of their identity and sometimes accompanying nervous breakdowns.

For the newcomer, the ashram may feel a little like a boot camp. The schedule is exhausting. There is very little time for reflection. There is a great deal of work to do. There is a uniform to wear. A complete break with the past is encouraged by those around him. The difference between boot camp and the ashram is that the ashram is a friendly place. Members are always free to leave and the expressed

purpose of the ashram is to have its members grow toward higher consciousness in the service of humanity. So, each time the student surrenders to the process he is rewarded by the sense that he is growing. Furthermore, he can see others around him that are products of the process. They seem to be happy and energetic. They usually accept him immediately as a peer and with that ensues peer group pressure to keep up. Plus, there is a teacher, the head of the ashram, whose job it is to look after his well-being. Usually the head of the ashram has been doing the yoga long enough so the results are tangible. The new student has peers and models he can look to for support and inspiration.

During the first month or so I usually say very little directly to a student. I like him to get the feel of things by himself and absorb the strength of the household. The rigorous ashram schedule of four to five hours of sleep is usually hard on beginners and I encourage them to go to bed early or take naps in the afternoon. I try to give a student as much room to explore as he needs while making sure he feels a part of everything.

I do consider it important that everyone is doing a strong sadhana. The yoga gives the student the strength and courage he needs to keep up. The group chanting makes the communal vibration powerful. Households, like people, evolve. Three years ago much less was expected of an ashram

member. White clothes were rare, turbans were not required, and schedules were less demanding. The student who moves in now must become part of a highly evolved household and for that reason the ashram now attracts a more committed student than it would have at its inception.

There is a great deal of hope for individuals' psychological improvement in an ashram. There are no stories that the new student can relate of his past experiences that will shock anyone. He has moved into a society of incipient saints but they didn't always aspire to that consciousness. The reaction to a grizzly story is usually "It's a wonder how low you have to go sometimes to find out you want to go high." There is a feeling that there is no problem that can't be solved if one just keeps up.

There is very little opportunity for even the most manipulative newcomer to "lay his number" on people. Chanting the Nam and always telling the truth gives one the power to see through the most sophisticated acts. At last the new student has found people who won't respond to his manipulations, only to his divine qualities and potential. It's not that they negate his lower side. But it doesn't interest them very much. Instead people are interested in how to improve and grow. In short, the newcomer has just bought his ticket on the express train and found that no one sits in the passenger seats. Everyone is in the engine room

shoveling coal and he's more than welcome to join.

Another factor that gives hope is the encouragement of vocational training and educational advancement. Many students "dropped out of the straight world to find themselves." While living in an ashram they may desire to finish school, or learn carpentry, masonry, weaving, etc. 3HO is oriented toward society's service and accruing the societal credentials that gain entrance to influential positions becomes worth having rather than scorned. Once identity problems are solved within an individual it is surprising how antipathies and phobias about school and employment fall away. Ashram members usually become very good students because of their high motivation to learn. All knowledge seems to glorify God. Studying becomes more of a jnana yoga (yoga of knowledge) than the meaningless chore it is for many students.

As for the therapeutic aspects of the psychology underlying the yoga there is a personality theory that analyzes character through loci of energy. There are eight chakras, circles of energy in the body, in Kundalini yoga. The first chakra is located at the base of the spine or the rectum. If a man's consciousness is centered there he is likely to have the mentality of an animal. He is like a dog who sees what he wants and takes it with no regard for others. "I see it, I want it. I take it. I eat it." In his sexual life too, anything goes. Any kind of perversion is all right

with him. The second chakra is located at the sex organs. A person centered there cares only for sex. In his dealings with others he is manipulative. A person centered at the navel point or third chakra, is greedy and hungry for power and likes to feel his power dealing with others. To be centered at the fourth chakra or heart center, is to be loving and compassionate. When that center opens one feels a love for everyone. He begins to be able to listen with an open heart and act wisely. The fifth chakra is at the throat. A man whose throat chakra is open cannot speak anything but the truth. He may be harsh or his words may be honey coated, but in any case they will always be True in the highest sense of the word. The sixth chakra is at the brow point. Its energy brings humility and understanding. When the seventh chakra, the crown chakra at the top of the head, opens a man lives in universality and total gratitude. The eighth center is the aura, the protective force around a person. To be able to radiate energy from this center is to live beyond the physical plane.

Yogiji says that all centers must be strong but one should relate to others from the heart chakra up. Kundalini yoga transmutes the energy from the lower centers to the higher ones. Exercises like Sat Kriya (described in Chapter II) bring energy from the lower triangle of the first through third chakras to the brow point and the top of the head. If it weren't for Sat Kriya and similar exercises,

it would be very difficult to control energy from the lower centers. Each morning sadhana, if properly done, centers one's energy for the day. Through meditation and prayer a positive compassionate attitude is elicited and through exercises the energy is transmuted from lower centers to higher ones.

The physical exercises, the twenty-hour schedule, the positively reinforcing peer group pressure and the feeling of hope for the future all uplift and help the new student. Even so his personality habits are still there and even though there is now very little place for their appropriate expression, they still don't fall away overnight. The present trend in psychological thought is toward "acting out" of problems and feelings. People spend hundreds of dollars in Gestalt therapy groups learning to get in touch with their anger, sensuality, greed, homosexuality -- all the parts of them they've buried because those parts were ugly to them. Through this kind of therapy one learns to own those feelings and integrate them into a larger concept of themselves. He learns in therapy that those "horrible" parts of himself are quite human and not as scorned by others as he formerly thought. He then gains more confidence in himself, and in his new perspective and repertoire of freer emotional expression his anxiety can abate a bit.

Meditations often spontaneously bring to consciousness many dark areas of the mind in a way similar to the phantasy

techniques used in modern psychotherapies. Because meditators sleep little their sleep schedules often eliminate the stage of sleep wherein heavy dreaming occurs. The advantage of sleeping without dreaming is that the rest one gets is total rest. Often one can wake up from dreams drained of energy. In meditation the same kind of dreamlike material may emerge but in meditation one is conscious and can therefore put the most bizzare images into a universal perspective.

The difference between the growth sought by people who choose psychotherapy over yoga is one of purpose. Many in psychotherapy feel they have holes in them they would like filled. They would like to be loving and lovable. Many want to gain a sense of personal power and esteem. They want to be appreciated for their uniqueness and lose the fear of being rejected for their "less attractive" parts.

A 3HO yogi wants to know himself. He wants to grow through chanting the Nam and serving humanity. He doesn't place as much emphasis on being loved as loving. He wants to give out unattached selfless love, love that demands nothing in return. He wants to be humble and not glorify his own personality. His personality becomes stronger through fearlessness and he uses it to teach, but essentially it holds little interest for him. Sacrifice, humility and service, which are rarely stated as goals in psychotherapy, are ideals which he would like to incorporate into his consciousness and daily actions.

Strangely enough, both approaches build strong personalities. Most psychotherapies stop there while the yogi's primary desire, union with God, is still to be fulfilled.

Questions often arise in yoga class discussion groups "What do I do with my anger?" or "What do I do with my sexual desires?" or "How do I get rid of my pride?" "Doesn't it hurt you to hold in anger?" The answer is that we never hold anything in, we only use it. Yogiji always says anger is the quickest way to God. (Anger is the fire element. It is pure energy. You need that energy for your blood to circulate and your food to digest.) Love will get you there sometimes but anger will always have enough energy to carry you across. It gives you zeal. That fire can be used or misused. There is nothing wrong with fire but if it burns the house down it's no help at all. There's no way out of being angry, but be angry at everything in yourself that is negative. Burn out your own impurities. Why injure someone with your wrath when you could use that energy to clean yourself out. If you are angry with someone then it must be talked out, but one can communicate without tantrums.

I can just hear the voice of current clinical psychology disapprovingly whispering in the background. "Now their repression is complete. It is well known what kinds of personality disorders, depressions, and psychosomatic difficulties come from anger turned inward."

A friend of mine and a Gestalt therapist said of the yogic use of anger, "I paid \$2,000 so I could get angry. I'm not going to give it up now." A good example of anger working itself into meditation is the example of the internal conversation between positive and negative in Chapter II (pp. 41, 42). But if there is real anger some good strenuous yoga exercises and then a meditation with long deep breathing is bound to have a calming effect. After all, where is the anger? I got angry at my sister. The anger is in me not her. I'm attached to something or some action and I only feel she has me blocked. The anger comes from my attachment not her action. Why not get angry at the source of anger and use the energy?

The reason why this prathyhar (substitution of a higher thought for a lower one) works is that the yoga is effective in bringing about physiological changes that exclude anger. If one is physically in total relaxation and mentally calm while chanting the mantra then it is impossible to be angry. And if you are not angry, then where is the anger?

The difference between the successful use of this technique and repression is that in repression one remains angry while trying to act otherwise. In yoga one starts by acting otherwise but those actions, i.e. meditations and long deep breathing, powered by the force of anger bring about a higher consciousness. And once in that consciousness anger and the "cause" of the anger become laughable.

Pride also has energy. Be proud of being a great yogi. Let your ego push you to great yogic feats. It will change your nervous system around and eventually pride will give way to humility.

Pride can also be dealt with by the head of the ashram. Say that a student in the ashram has begun to teach some yoga classes of his own. He begins to feel great amounts of energy run through him in class. He feels he teaches a magnificent class, that he is spiritually blessed to be that true a channel for God's energy ... etc. If the situation gets out of hand the teacher can put another student in his place, or humiliate him at a house meeting. It is important that no one feels he is indispensable or special. If he feels that he is better than anyone else because he's a teacher or doing a sadhana while most of the world sleeps, then he is the greatest fool. Pride kills communion and without communion there will be no union with God.

Desire has the same solution. Never try to be desireless; it will produce insanity. Instead, desire all that will bring you to God. Desire the universal self.

In practical terms it is the lesson every scorpio must learn. Actually, their desire is to merge with everyone. They want to dive into the essence of a person to feel that they are one with him. They want to unite with everyone. Those who are low in their consciousness confuse this desire to merge with sexual desire. Sexually they will be insati-

able until they discover that the union they want is more vast than the union of two bodies. Then the scorpio's insatiable desire will be for union with God.

The psychology is all the same. Change emotions to devotion and grace will find you.

So far I have discussed areas that relate to the student as an individual or a member of the ashram. But what about his relationship with his parents? Watching their child's metamorphosis parents' reactions range from paranoia to jubilation. Some parents feel that their sons and daughters are becoming aliens before their eyes and they are powerless to dissuade them. Other parents are grateful that their child has found a healthy, happy, holy way of life. Often their sons and daughters who used to be directionless are now finishing college or starting businesses. 3H0 people are workers and most parents can relate to their children's new found sense of industry and responsibility.

The following excerpts were taken from an autobiographical account of a twenty-two year old married 3H0 woman. Her account is in many ways typical although no two stories are alike.

When parents first hear of the yoga, they have little information and are for the most part neutral. Moving into an ashram is quite another step and this often brings out parents' worst fears. Usually they feel their children are

being taken advantage of and the yoga is part of a "phoney scheme to collect money and glory for someone."

"When I first started doing yoga, I was really turned on to it and I said, 'Well you know I'm doing Yoga.' And I told them about the Ashram and they listened but you know they also wanted to know about other things, and it hadn't turned into my whole life yet, and I didn't think too much of it. Then when I called up and said that I'd moved into the ashram, they said, 'Oh No.!! I thought that you were ... They just want your money, and THEY!!!' It was always they, a weird they and not me."

Parents may feel their children have moved beyond the sphere of their influence into a religious mode of life and thought which is bound to be dogmatic.

Family events, birthdays and Christmas usually illustrate to what extent the student is involved. If Mrs. Singh had come home for her birthday, her parents would have been satisfied that she still related to them as father and mother. But her decision to be with her 3HO family seemed to confirm their fears that their daughter was slipping away from them.

"Finally it came time to be my birthday.

That's when they all called me. My father said,

'You know, you're just not part of this family, you know and you might as well just forget about us, we're never going to call you.' My sister called up and said, 'We're your family, and you belong with us, why are you with them, they don't love you like we do, YOU BELONG HERE WITH US!!!'

The above scene is extreme in its emotionalism but illustrates well the essence of the problem. The children are in a bind. They have found a way of life that has taught them how to love and serve, a life that fills them in a way nothing has before and yet that lifestyle causes their parents pain. The more they have grown in 3H0 the more they appreciate and love their own parents. They now want to be good sons and daughters to give their parents respect and love. But they will not negate themselves and if parents insist they give up 3H0, then the children usually reconcile themselves to the fact that there will be more painful times to come with their parents.

Time has a healing effect. After a year or so of seeing their children consistently happy, energetic and positive, they become impressed. It is hard not to be impressed with such positive results. If it weren't for the white clothes and turbans they would be ecstatic. 3H0 marriages are for the most part steady and a welcome sight to parents in a world of crumbling cultural institutions.

"And then they totally changed, once I got married the whole thing changed. Because they felt like someone could take care of me and that I wasn't alone and they could relate to it. Then they could relate to my life more, because it was something they understood. Celibacy they couldn't understand; yoga they couldn't understand; vegetarianism they couldn't understand, but marriage they could understand."

Still, parents might feel a little uneasy about 3HO, particularly Yogiji. He is sometimes seen as a usurper and parents feel resentful. In India it is understood that in life there are four teachers -- the mother, the father, the environment and the spiritual teacher. Parents are suspicious of a spiritual teacher. A mother of a 3HO student in Boston said to her daughter, "Why can't you be content with drugs and sex like the other kids. This religion stuff is no good."

"The only thing parents don't understand is our relationship with Yogiji. There is a lot they don't understand but that seems to bug them the most.

"The oriental family would never feel that way because they understand the concept of the Guru and a spiritual teacher and they understand things like that and it's not .. I mean, God just doesn't enter into the lives of Western people, it's just too

weird. 'Drinking I could understand; drugs I maybe could accept, sex is fine, but God, I mean, like how come you want to be holy, how come you want to do this weird thing, why do you want God? You have everything, why are you throwing it all away?'"

It is hard also for parents to believe that their sons and daughters, whose diapers they had changed in their first years of life, are now spiritual teachers whom people seek out for advice.

"'Yoga and God.' Where my parents can't relate to it. People, say, adults who have seen me and known me grow up think that it's the best thing that's ever happened. My parents are emotionally involved with me so they can't see it clearly, but other people think that it's been phenomenal. But they are proud of me in a very bizarre way; they themselves will bug me but they know that the energy and what I understand is so powerful that they just keep telling people to come over to meet me."

The more parents get to observe their children's lives close up the more they can feel the solidity and righteousness of the lifestyle. Vickie's mother came to visit her to help with the arrival of the new baby. She saw the baby born in the ashram. When a mother watches her daughter give birth, she realizes her daughter is not a child any-

more. And seeing her daughter physically strong and spiritually ecstatic in the birth process convinced her that her daughter was a strong woman on a spiritual path that had undeniable benefits.

"My mother came when the baby was born and lived in the ashram for a month and washed dishes in the restaurant and waited on tables and wore white clothes, and she loved it. She said that if it wasn't for my father, she would have never gone back."

Finally the grandchildren begin to grow and the old feelings of family are revived, much to everyone's delight.

"Well the grandchildren bring such joy to the life of the grandparents. They are going to be the bridge of the gap, not us. They are the only things that are keeping our parents in love with us. Because now they love their grandchildren so much they can't stand it. I looked over one night when I had woken up and saw my mother sitting in the rocking chair holding Hari Krishan singing, 'Ek ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru,' and she said as she'd look at her, 'Sat Nam, Hari Krishan, I know what your first words are going to be, they're going to be 'Sat Nam.'"

C H A P T E R I V

The day of marriage of the soul-bride
with her Lord has dawned.

O friends, pour the oil of love down
upon the threshold,

And give me all your blessings

That I may know a perfect union with
my Lord.¹

Peace Lagoon

If Kundalini yoga cleans the unconscious mind then Tantric yoga runs a river of love through it. If Kundalini yoga makes one unafraid, then Tantric yoga lets you march over armies. Tantric yoga is the fear killer. Yogiji is the Mahan Tantric, the master of Tantric yoga and in a gathering of over 1,000 people he surrounds the sangat with his magnetic field, screening their negativity through his consciousness. As men and women sit facing each other, eyes looking into eyes, chanting mantras, their fears emerge, and full of fears or full of love they face their partners, eyes into eyes. With eyes into eyes, there is no place to hide.

June of 1971 was the time of my first tantric course in the mountains of Colorado. I remember one exercise of standing with one foot raised and its sole touching my partner's sole. My right palm was against hers, with our left hands held in the air like Shiva and Shakti dancing. My balance had been impaired by illness and I could only stay in position less than a minute. Through that one and a half hour exercise my partner looked in my eyes with total love as my eyes first apologized for stumbles, refusing her acceptance. Then the energy caught me; my gaze became fixed and steady. Fall, veer - I didn't mind. I became Shiva and she had always been Shakti.

Then Karma yoga with ditches to dig and a body that ached from the constant exercise and labor. It was a body

that wasn't used to two meals a day or 3:30 a.m. dips in an irrigation ditch.

Every morning I was ready to leave and every morning Yogiji in his house turban and bathrobe held me with his voice. I had never heard a man talk like that. He seemed so wise and so strange. He didn't look like a yogi. Yogis were scrawny. Who ever heard of a six foot two inch, two hundred ten pound yogi? And he spoke slang. He coined slang. He played with words and he played with us. "Harness your horniness and you will be the living God." He had to be kidding. "Yogiji, are you kidding?" A huge warm hand fell on my shoulder. "Sonny," he said, "It's your energy. You do what you like with it." Aw, come on, I suppose masturbation makes you blind. But then maybe he was right and my world began to beautifully disintegrate like a painting slowly blowing away into confetti.

"Yogiji," I asked him in Boston, "when I was at the Solstice my arthritis went away. Was it the diet? What can I take now?"

"Yah, you can take the pepper corns and swallow them whole. Eat plenty of garlic." We were in a pizza parlor with a big 3HO entourage.

"Garlic? You just swallow it?" He had been looking at me all day. Finally he leveled both eyes at me. My smile vanished.

"What has gone wrong with you, Sonny?"

"Wrong?"

"What has gone wrong with you?"!

Silence in the pizza parlor.

"With me? I..."

"Your aura is green. Your circulation is bad. You are afraid. Why are you afraid? What are you afraid of?"

Well, I'm afraid of you for one...

"What are you afraid of? If you have fear then you can't love. If you can't love then hang it up. Hang it up!"

The door was only a few feet away. If his eyes would only release me, my ego and I could make it out the door. Forget it. You can't run from that kind of truth. It's too true.

"O.K. what do I do?"

"Be fearless. Be fearless!! If God makes you afraid leave him. Don't you know the universe is not perfect without you the way you are right now? Don't you know it?"

Man, I don't know anymore what I don't know.

My teacher, Sat Karam Singh said later, "Boy, Yogiji must love you a lot to give you that much energy."

"Yeah, a lot." I was numb, but I stuck around. Yogiji had my number.

At the next Washington course I freaked out with self hate. People loved me. I hated them for getting close and for loving anyone as low as myself. If they could only see

how low I was. They were fools and I was destined to be alone.

"Yogiji, how can I get rid of my Scorpio ego?"

"You want to have sex with everyone? Change your emotion to devotion. Keep going to Tantric courses. You will be a teacher."

"O.K."

It was always "O.K."

"Sonny, why don't you climb up that rope with only your teeth."

"O.K."

"Sonny, just flush your past down the toilet."

"O.K."

"Sonny..."

"O.K....O.K. O.K. O.K!" It was my song. I loved that man. His mind was so vast. In Tantric we got to swim in it, like falling through an ocean to infinity. Love was too little a word.

"Sonny, you're O.K. now."

"I know." I was getting healed.

Tantric courses brought a feeling of family. There was Lawton from Atlanta and Mark from Detroit, Larry and Ganga and Peter from Washington.. What a family. The more we grew the more we loved. We all sacrificed to come to these courses. We had very little money but we always made it. And Tantric was always far out. Had Yogiji been that beauti-

ful before or had I failed to notice? I was in for keeps and there were others like me, only better.

I had returned from the Colorado Tantric course with a new view of marriage.

In 1969 before I started Kundalini Yoga I felt marriage was a stagnant anachronistic institution that had a lethal effect on love. Marriages of friends who had been living happily together for years before marriage were disintegrating. It seemed marriage as bequeathed to us by previous generations did not possess the breathing space or elasticity to provide for growth. The prevailing emphasis among the humanistic psychotherapists (then the "gurus" of many seeking growth) was to dig behind the surface emotions, find the parts of yourself that craved growth and integration, and work on the self accordingly. Sometimes these discoveries were contrary to one's current life directions and "self-imposed obligations," and one was usually advised to bravely follow the dictates of the psyche for a healthier mental state. Many marriages readjusted, dispersed and regrouped to the famous Fritz Perls tune:

"I do my thing. You do your thing.

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations.

You are not in this world to live up to mine.

You are you, and I am I. If by chance

we find each other it's beautiful.

If not, it can't be helped."

My relationships with women at this point were friendly, sexual and definitely transient. We were all existential heroes then and who ever knew if the next moment might not bring wholly different circumstances that would make the present relationship obsolete. I had had a very fulfilling one year relationship that had broken up when we contemplated marriage. For me, marriage was not only worthless but destructive.

There was something a little desperate about relationships in those days. Marriage was frowned upon; giving birth to and raising children was unthinkable. It was as if a whole generation was saying, "I cannot commit myself to a steady course of action for one month let alone years. Children bring responsibility that is beyond my ability to bear." When people are so unsure that they feel they cannot responsibly bring children into the world the future begins to look a little grey. Relationships between men and women with no future feel hollow. No matter how much "enjoyment" or "growth" takes place the continuing choice of conditional fidelity and barrenness drives a loneliness deep into the subconscious, a loneliness that erodes from within momentary joys.

Tantric yoga brought the hope of marriage. After each course my energy level became higher from the removal

of fears and upon feeling tangible results from the yoga I began to feel that someday I would make a good husband and father.

Tantric yoga is no ordinary yoga. It cannot be practiced without the Mahan Tantric present because it takes his mastery over emotions to be not only effective but safe. Partners face each other in lines while Yogiji who sits at the front of the group projects his astral body* to the other side of the group. He connects between his physical and astral bodies his psychoelectric magnetic field and spreads that field over the group aura. Under that protection the auras of the students may not merge with each other and neither can their destinies entwine. The tantric students' auras change to blue and gold (devotion and perfection). At that point they are very open psychically and psychologically fragile. A lot of unconscious negativity comes to the surface and in order to release that negativity without its projection onto the partner, Yogiji controls the group energy with his own and screens the negativity through his own consciousness. If he were not himself totally detached the negativity released from such a group would probably make him ill if not kill him. Tantric yoga needs special circumstances. It has a special teacher and yields special

* astral body - a vibratory self that can be projected to places other than where the physical body rests.

results.

After awhile I began to be sensitive to energies and words like "magnetic field" and "aura" began to have referents. What Yogiji had said about celibacy before marriage began to make sense, on a very practical level, not just a moral level. Sexual intercourse was like tantric yoga in that the auras of the partners can merge. To merge with one person and then another weakens the circumvent force, to the extent that the partners are easy prey for negativity. Also, sexual intercourse brought with it the chance of pregnancy, and even though modern contraceptives reduced those chances to nearly nothing, there was a biologically based subconscious feeling in the woman that intercourse brought children. If there are to be children then there must be a marriage to care for them. There must be a husband to protect the woman when, in pregnancy, she is vulnerable. She must know that while she is in the throes of childbirth and supremely vulnerable there is a man there who is willing to protect her, come what may. If she is not assured that protection for childbirth, then intercourse is unfair, and even though she may desire intercourse the absence of a relationship that is a lifelong commitment will yield subconscious insecurity and resentment. The woman resents the man for refusing to fulfill his part of the bargain, a bargain that is as old as our species and one that cannot be broken inconsequentially.

It is the man's weakness and insensitivity that has caused our marriages to disintegrate. He is the one who has broken the agreement. Women have always been sensitive to their own needs. They never liked, as much as men did, to be sexually promiscuous. If they slept with man after man, intuitively they experienced the breakdown of their magnetic fields. They may have felt sought after but undeniably they felt "scattered" too. Men have always been more obtuse in this respect -- hence the double standard. The double standard broke down to a unilateral free for all when the women finally gave up hope of finding strong men. So many marriages had been profaned by men, who out of their weakness, refused to give women credit and emotional support for raising beautiful children. Instead husbands came home from their places of work in a haze of self-importance and conveyed in one way or another that women were inferior because their jobs did not confront the difficulties of "the world." Men had forgotten that children are our most precious gifts and that their futures, and consequently the future of our planet, were our sacred trust. What task takes more love, patience and creativity than raising a child; and what task could be more important? Men have forgotten that they were born of a woman. Women of this decade have given up waiting for men to remember, and now they themselves have forgotten how graceful womanhood can be. They find the most compassion from other women, and men seek the company of other men. Homosexuality is a natural

outcome of the breakdown of trust and respect between the sexes. Homosexuality is not wrong, but there is no future in it; there are no children in it and children are our future.

For me, and others like me, Tantric yoga gave me back my birthright as a male to live as a married man and feel whole. Did I go to two or three Tantric courses and become spontaneously cured? No, it took time. It may help if I relate a personal experience of my marriage and the period preceding it. They illustrate a shift in consciousness from the prevailing cultural climate of male-female relationships to a way of relating that seems to have transcended the restrictions of our culture and counter-cultures.

In Tantric yoga I began to feel my personal debt and our cultural debt owed to women. When in Tantric a woman stares for the first time into the eyes of a strong man, she is likely to cry. If she senses that he is loving and powerful in his projection, that he is the kind of man who would never betray her, that would die to defend her, a part of her begins to crumble and with that breakdown emerge all the questions that she had long ago given up asking. They may emerge so powerfully that she could never verbalize why she's crying but if she could she might say, "You look strong. You even look godlike. But are you real? I have never been treated selflessly by a man, not even my own father. Can I give myself to you and not be cast aside? Can I open myself

to you to receive love that I've always dreamed I could have? Can I open myself that way and receive love instead of the poison of your insecurity and conceit?" And if she feels the answer might be "yes" then all the pain in keeping defenses against a world that uses her as flesh, that sells her in nightclubs by exposing the flesh of her breasts, that sells cars with her legs and liquor with the promise of trampling her grace -- all that pain must fill her again before she can find release. And as a man, and a partner, you must answer those questions yourself. Can you be worthy of the trust she has shown you?

Tantric yoga shows you that the responsibility in marriage is awesome but it also gives you the strength to take it on. At a Tantric course in Washington Yogiji asked me, "Do you have a girlfriend?" "No, Yogiji." I said. After one exercise he started talking about various members of 3HO and how low they were before they came into the family. He made a few stand up and good naturedly teased them publicly. He made me stand up and said he had been looking for a wife for me for a long time. Then he pointed into the crowd and said, "You, the other one, come here." He referred to her as "the other one" because her best friend had just gotten engaged. We stood together before the crowd and Yogiji said, "Do I have the approval of this gathering for this marriage?" Of course, there was wild applause, even from people who had just walked in off the

street. I looked into the eyes of my bride-to-be and said, "What's your name?" We were married five days later amidst a happy 3HO family and a few astonished blood relatives.

"It is easy to get married. It is hard to stay married." says Yogiji. I had never seen my wife before. I was determined in starting on this new relationship not to let my old lower conscious habits obtrude.

Yogiji had told us that where the man rules in the house there is harmony. Where the woman rules it is hell on earth. I had thought, well, that's a cultural difference. Yogiji was brought up in India and here we don't expect a woman to behave in such a servile manner. So, I never set any really firm boundaries with my wife. When she came to the ashram, she was very insecure and frightened. She spent most of her time either asleep or walking in the woods. She did very little work around the house and was unwilling to assume the responsibilities as the mother of the household. I thought in time she would adjust and I would just leave her alone.

A visit from a friend brought new perspective. He pointed out that I wasn't following Yogiji's teachings, that she needed her role clearly delineated and she would be insecure and rebellious as long as she thought I was weak enough to let her get away with her childishness. He told me that his marriage had been similar until he tried three days of silence. Yogiji said, "Sometimes the woman

becomes a little upright uptight. She carries her shoulders just so. If you can't recognize those signs and be prepared to get her out of it, then get ready for the divorce courts. When she is that way, tie her up, carry her to the lake and dump her in." He also said, "No woman can stand three days of silence from her husband." Lawton said silence worked with his wife, but I was skeptical. I was skeptical that it would work and skeptical that I needed to try it. I remember clearly the moment when I came home and handed my wife some green stamps. Her eyes told me she was totally out of control. She let the green stamps flutter to the floor as if to say "Green stamps? Who do you think you are? Who do you think I am?" Actually, it was a good question. I wasn't sure I had the answer, but I was certain she didn't, so I began a silence.

When she first discovered I was on silence she asked, "Hasn't there been enough pain already?" I was silent that day and silent for four more until I was sure her ego had broken. The last two of the five days she had spent almost continually reading from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. My first words to her were important after such a long silence. "You are my wife." I said. "Your place is by my side and you must help me. You must be there all the time with all your strength. I have spent twenty-six years without a wife. I don't care if I go to my grave without one. If you won't act as my wife, then you cannot be my wife."

She said, "Thank you."

The man is the sun and the woman is the moon. She is the receptive force. She changes like the moon. Her body is on a lunar menstrual cycle. Just as she is a daughter of the moon man is a child of the sun. He is steady and unchanging. She will become emotional and he will be steadfast. His steadiness can always return a woman to calmness provided one thing is present. Provided she has given herself to God. Otherwise man will never win. A woman is sixteen times more powerful than a man. Those pictures of the Goddess Kali with many arms of weapons, mutilated men in her mouth -- those paintings are not a joke. Men out of their supreme egos think they can tame a woman. A woman can never be tamed by a man unless she submits first. She is Shakti, a manifestation of the primal creative power of the universe. If she decides to reach God in a marriage, she will let her husband mould her. If she hasn't seen her path to God as service in marriage, she can destroy him.

Guru Ram Das said to his daughter before she married Guru Arjun, "There are three things you must say to your husband. 'You are right.' 'I am sorry.', and 'It is the will of God.'" He told her if she could live in the consciousness of service and humility she would be a queen in her own household. There is no God conscious man who can approach such a woman without humility.

Humility and grace in marriage bring heaven to earth.

There is a saying "The greatest ashram is in the home of a householder. Even Gods and Goddesses long to lead that life." For if our marriage, our union of one soul in two bodies becomes graceful, then God will take us as a groom takes his bride. Then our love will be complete.

"The destiny which is written on my forehead is fulfilled, by the Guru's Grace Nanak, night and day my Beloved enjoys me and having taken God as my mate, my marriage is for eternity."²

C O N C L U S I O N

The ashram is an educational institution. It teaches people how to find God. Literally ashram means home of the guru and guru means "that which takes one from darkness to light." Shouldn't every educational institution take one from darkness to light?

A student on the path towards light undergoes vast growth in the ashram. Besides learning skills of everyday life (yoga, natural foods cooking, carpentry, masonry, farming, music, etc.) he undergoes a personal maturational growth that manifests itself as a new sense of responsibility and a respect for others. Spiritual practices lead him to a greater awareness of God's omnipresence and teachings on marriage and family offer a lifestyle that is viable, spiritual and cozy. In short, he learns to be healthy, happy and holy.

Much of the force for change comes from the ashram environment. As a community fostering commitment, it ranks as high as any of Ms. Kanter's nine successful 19th Century utopian communities in use of the mechanisms for commitment. The commitment is necessary to support a lifestyle that is so demanding. There is only one qualification for membership - that is the will to humbly submit to the process of praising God through selfless service - to keep up.

One of the members of the Bruderhof, an offshoot of the Hutterites, expressed it clearly.

"We do not choose who comes; the door is open to all. But it is a narrow door, and anyone inflated with self-importance or pride cannot fit through. Here, those we may have a natural antipathy for are sometimes the very people we are working with all day, eating with and meeting with at night. We come face to face with what it means to love our neighbor -- not just our friends but those whom we would not ordinarily choose as friends. Such a life is not everybody's dish. There are many who come and do not stay. They leave as friends -- it is just that the price is too high."¹

We love our life at the ashram, yet it is only a dharma. A dharma is to be lived, ~~not~~ worshipped. It is only a vessel to carry us across, so that when life is over we may leave this earth in grace and gratitude. It is the same with all lives, all dharmas, and as Yogiji often tells us "It is not the life that matters, but the courage you bring to it."

A P P E N D I X

The techniques have been used by us, myself and teaching assistants, on the college level through physical education classes. These classes are skill training sessions, through which the student learns ostensibly how to stretch his or her body, manipulate the body to affect the mental self, and calm the mind through meditation. The student also learns, but this aspect is more intrinsic and less tangible, that the teachers care about him and that there is a whole alternate lifestyle lived by the instructor that seems calm, productive and fulfilling. For most college students this is at least intriguing. At most it's something they have thirsted for and found. And all this is disguised and catalogued as P. E. 100 by the computer which doesn't differentiate except nominally between yoga and volleyball.

I administered a questionnaire and received universally positive responses. The following is among the most positive, and it is interesting because the student is a P. E. major.

1. Q. Did you enjoy the course?

A. Very much!

Q. How did it compare with other physical education courses you have taken?

A. This course has been more productive and meaningful in all dimensions than any of

the thirteen skills I have taken. I am a P. E. major and thought this was very fulfilling.

2. Q. Has your drug usage (if any) or attitude toward drugs changed this semester?

A. Yes.

Q. If so, to what do you attribute the change?

A. I did not even begin to think that this discipline of yoga would end any of my drug use as I am very scientifically oriented in terms of physiology, but in mid-October I noticed that I no longer would drink beer nor would I smoke pot anymore ... I don't do anything else. I do drink a few beers occasionally now, but that is all. No more drugs at all! (Italics his!)

3. Q. Have you noticed any general change in your energy level, ability to concentrate, and general emotional state after beginning Kundalini yoga?

A. I was always very active -- but very anxious, uptight and unable to concentrate. I am still active but not so anxious anymore, and concentrate much better and enjoy a much more stable emotional state. This stuff really works.

4. Q. Has the course in any way affected your daily life (relationships) with others -- parents, friends, members of the opposite sex, sexual relationships, general ability to cope with things, etc.?

A. I can cope with things better and relationships with others have improved due to my change in attitude!

5. Q. Feel free to comment on the quality of instruction and any other aspects of the course.

A. I initially took the course to stretch my muscles and improve my breathing and concentration so as to improve my long-distance running ability. I didn't think the course would help my entire life. But it did and it still does. This is an amazing course and has not only improved my body but my mind, too!

6. Q. Would you take a Kundalini Yoga II class if it were offered?

A. Yes, without question!

The questionnaire is helpful in evaluating Kundalini yoga as a mere physical education class. No one among the seventy-two Smith College and University of Massachusetts

students answered the first question in the negative. 87.5% reported the course to be superior to other physical education courses and 12.5% declined to comment because of lack of a basis for comparison (i.e. it was their first P. E. course). No one responded negatively.

On Question 2, 50% reported a change toward less frequent or no usage; of those 50%, 91.4% attributed the change, at least partially, to Kundalini yoga, 30.6% reported no change. 0% reported more drug usage. 19.4% were not using drugs at the start or during the course.

A typical positive response was:

"I have stopped using all drugs including alcohol, which is in part due to this course. The general philosophy taught, i.e. shouldn't pollute your body with drugs since it will negate all the good you've done."

There were also positive responses from people who had never taken drugs. A Smith College freshman reports:

"Have never felt the need or urge to try drugs. I am, of course, curious but prefer not to mess around with my system. Kundalini yoga seems to reinforce my position that you can get high without drugs of any kind."

On question No. 3:

91.9% noticed a change for the better

2.8% not certain

4.2% noticed no change, and

1.4% (1 student) noticed a change for the worse but not attributed to yoga.

Some students, like this Smith College freshman, noticed changes but could not attribute them to yoga.

"Right after class I'm so high and happy -- I want to run around and kiss everybody. Whether or not my energy level has changed I'm not sure. (I have been sleeping a lot lately and, therefore, I have been well awake all day, i.e. I would attribute my energy gain to actual rest."

Some positive answers were:

"Am much happier, less fatigued than before class."

"Definitely. I've become more centered and even emotionally. My energy level has been greatly increased and general physical and mental well being is improved."

"I don't worry about insignificant things as I did before and my energy level and ability to concentrate seem to have increased somewhat."

"Very much so. Probably the first semester I've completed all my work."

Question No. 4

82.0% affirmative

15.2% negative

2.8% no answer

Some positive answers:

3F-UM "Yes, in feeling better, I react in a better way."

4F-UM "I feel I am more able to cope. Again I can judge by the absence of yoga. Those days when I do not have a chance to do some yoga in the morning -- I find myself on end. I make an effort to do some exercises and breathing at least once a day."

1M-UM "I've experienced improvement in all of these areas to varying degrees. Problems generally are easier to face."

5F-UM "The course has had a dramatic effect upon my whole lifestyle. It has made me re-evaluate my goals and attitudes towards life and others, so that I now see all people and situations in a positive light."

8F-UM "Am just in general happier with myself, less dependent on others and willing to look on the bright side of life in work and school, etc."

Question No. 5 gave people a chance to generally say what was on their minds. Many of the answers reflected the alienation felt in college and many students found the course and instructor's way of relating to them lessen

feelings of alienation. Some examples:

8F-UM "Teachers are very open and willing to give great personal attention to students which is what this University needs more of. Too many of the professors here are more interested in their own status and research than in teaching and educating."

10F-UM "Fantastic instructors -- no professor ever thanked me for attending a lecture before."

1M-UM "I can think of no other course I've ever taken so enjoyable, beneficial and consequently important to me."

5F-UM "(I) feel that it would be a great disservice to the university community not to offer it."

11F-S "Instruction was obviously always given with warmth and love -- what more can I say?!"

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- ⁴Kanter, *ibid.*, p. 76.
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